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PHILOSOPHICAL
DISSERTATIONS,
WITH PROPER
REFLECTIONS,
PROVING,

1. The Non-Eternity of MATTER, and that there is a Vacuum.
2. That there must necessarily be one Self-Existent Being in three Self-Existent Properties, with Attributes, infinitely Perfect. Proved *a Priori*.
3. That the Light and Heat of the *Sun*, dispersed into the Planetary System, are purely Spirituous, and carry along with them no Particles or Effluvia of Real Matter.
4. That the Soul is Immortal.

The THIRD EDITION, Corrected and Enlarged.

To which is added,
Three Philosophical Dissertations,
(Never before Publish'd.)

- PROVING,
1. That *Space* is absolutely Infinite.
 2. That Matter is not infinitely divisible.
 3. That the *Universal Space* is not interspersed throughout with Material Globes.

By BENJAMIN PARKER, Author of the
PHILOSOPHICAL MEDITATIONS, &c.

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T H E
P R E F A C E.

PHILOSOPHICAL Enquiries, before the clear Light of the Gospel, tho' they furnished Men with some Expectations of a future State of Rewards and Punishments, yet it was but in obscure Uncertainty, and it is very truly observed that the Gospel of CHRIST hath brought Life and Immortality to Light; but as there are too too many, who would choose the Works of Darkneſs in the Miſt of this Light, by rejecting the glorious Light of it; it is become neceſſary to have recourſe to Reaſon and Philoſophy to aſcertain ſuch Truths which the Gospel reveals; and as the Revelation of the Gospel gives Light to the Underſtandings of thoſe, who are prepared to receive its Truths, ſo does it add to the Illumina-

tion of the Mind in all modern Enquiries into true Philosophy.

And as the Gospel is found to give Light to Reason and Philosophy, it must necessarily be a divine Revelation, since nothing less could have removed the Mists of Error and Ignorance, that the World before laboured under.

Now the following Dissertations (which hang together in a Chain) are chiefly designed to prove, from natural Reason, the Being and Attributes of God, and the Immortality of the Soul, which we are assured of from the Gospel Revelation; whereby it may be observed that what the Gospel assures us of, is agreeable to natural Reason illuminated by it, so that where Reason and Revelation thus join together, as Philosophy proves the Truth of Revelation, so Revelation ascertains the Truth of such Philosophy; which indeed had need to join their Forces to put a Stop to the Growth of Atheism and Infidelity.

And as the Authority of Divine Revelation will give Life and Ennergy to my following Dissertations; so my following Dissertations are designed to add to the Belief of, and the Obedience to, the Gospel of CHRIST.

B. P.

Philosophical



Philosophical DISSERTATIONS.

DISSERTATION I.

*That Matter is not Eternal, and that there
is a Vacuum.*



WHATEVER is eternal must be uncreated, and whatever is uncreated must be of itself a necessary Being; and that Being, which is necessary has no Dependence upon any other, but all other Beings must depend *upon* and exist *in*, that necessary Being as its Original and first Cause.

Whatever then was not the Original and first Cause of all Things must be created by that which necessarily existed eternally; and that, which necessarily existed without Cause or Creation, must have an Equality of Existence every where; since Necessity of Existence implies an Impossibility of Non-Existence either as to Time

or Place, so that there was not a *when* or a *where* this Existence was not the same, which must therefore be *absolute infinite*, without being circumscribed or limited either by Time or Place: So then it must be impossible that it should not have the necessary Qualities that belong to Infinity, and whatever is absolutely Infinite must be possessed of absolute Perfections: (as I shall make appear in its proper Place) So that whatsoever necessarily exists, is endued with the Qualities that must be the Result of absolute Perfections, as Intelligence, Wisdom, and Power to create whatever was agreeable to that Wisdom, Power, and Intelligence.

But *Matter* could not be *this* intelligent Agent that gave Beings to all Things, because itself is incapable of Perception, Action, or Self-Motion, except when and while it is actuated by Spirit, and then it becomes capable of all; *Spirit* must then be the *first*, the only Intelligent, the only unoriginated and eternal Being: And before this unoriginated Existence began to act, and to produce Place out of Space, and Time out of Eternity, there could be no such Thing as Matter in Being, which was only created on purpose to be serviceable to such Creatures, who were to be made up of Body and Spirit: For it must be absurd to imagine, as some have, that Matter should be Eternal, or, as others, That the Divine and necessary Being hath never been without Creatures, but that from Eternity he has produced other Beings, or he must necessarily have been an Eternity inactive.

The

The Word Creation implies a Beginning of the Thing *created*; and if whatever is created must have a Beginning, as it necessarily must, then must there be an Eternity before that Beginning; but to imagine Creatures from Eternity must be absurd, for this would be to suppose Creatures necessary as well as the Creator, and whatever is necessary cannot be subject to Alteration or Change, nor could it require a Creation; for only what is created can be subjected to Alteration according to the Will of its Creator, and as its Acts of free Agency are directed by the Laws given it.

It must be absurd to reason that had not this necessary Being had Creatures from Eternity he must necessarily have been an Eternity inactive. This necessary Existent Being, being in himself infinitely Perfect, and his Eternity admits no Measure or Progression as Time does; and the nearest we can conceive of his Eternity past before he began his Creations; is, that no Time was past before this Beginning; for *Time* only commenced with the Beginning of Creation; but to imagine him an Eternity inactive, is making Time and Eternity similar to each other; whereas Eternity before the Creation was no more to the supreme, infinite, unoriginated Being than any present Instant of Time is to us, which we can neither measure nor continue, but by its constantly flowing as it comes and makes no stay, is that which alone gives Time a Name and Duration to us, created Beings; which, before the Commencement of Time and Duration, had not a Being in the unoriginated Existence;

nor

nor does the Commencement of Time and Matter make any Change in his Eternity, who has created Time and Place subservient only to his Creatures, which make no Change in himself no more than if he had yet remained without them : And till Time commenced 'tis impossible he could be idle ; for to imagine one to be idle and have no *Time* to work in, is expecting Work to be done without Time to do it in, and could it be done without Time, then might God work from Eternity, but this is absurd : 'Twas sufficient, when God began his Creations, that he should with them produce Time to perform them in, without which no Creature could have been produced, therefore no Creature can be from Eternity, which to suppose would form an *Hypothesis* to destroy the very Nature of Eternity, and make Time itself of the same Date.

Now whatever is a necessary Being must be every where, for whatever necessarily exists of itself any where, without Cause or Origination, must, for the same Reason, exist every where, because the Necessity of its Existence, in the very Idea of it, must imply an Impossibility of its Non-Existence (of which in the next Dissertation) and where there is an Impossibility of Non-Existence, it must be impossible but that such Existence must exist every where, for whatever may be excluded from any Place cannot be unoriginated or eternal, but may be supposed to be excluded from other Places, *ad infinitum*, until it may be supposed to be excluded from every where, and consequently be no where.

But

But Matter is not every where (of which hereafter) therefore not a necessary Being or unoriginated, but created in Time, not from Eternity, and if not from Eternity then was it created out of nothing by the Will and Pleasure of the only unoriginated, necessary, Self-existent, infinitely wise, and powerful spiritual Existence of the supreme God over all his Works, blessed for ever.

Now that Matter is not every where, or that there is a *Vacuum* appears, first, from all the Planetary Bodies of our System, describing equal *Areas* in equal Times, or by finishing their Revolutions exactly in the same *Periods*, one Time after another, which they could not do if they mov'd in a *Plenum*, for then must their Motions be retarded, for Matter (according to the known Laws of Nature) must necessarily resist their Motions, and cause them to grow slower and slower, and at last to cease.

If it be objected that the *Plenum* is itself mov'd along with the Bodies in it, and is therefore no Let or Hindrance to their Motions,

This Objection is easily remov'd, by observing, that if this was so, then all the Revolutions of the whole System of Bodies, at what Distance soever, would be performed in one and the same Time; for supposing a *Plenum*, and that this *Plenum* moves along with the whole System, then from the *Center* of the *Plenum* the whole must have the Motion commensurate, and so the Distance give no Alteration as to Time, to the Motions of the whole System; nay the whole U-

niverse (upon this Hypothesis) must be concerned in it ; which appears, even in our own System, *de facto*, it is not, Witness, the Revolutions of our Primary Planets, whose Revolutions vary according to their Distances from their central Luminary the *Sun*, whose Magnitudes, Weights, and Distances are proportion'd to a proper Velocity to preserve them in their common Orbs either from flying off in their Tangents, or from being let fall into the Centre of Attraction.

So likewise the Attendants of the Primary Planets, *viz.* our *Moon*, with the *Satellites* of *Saturn* and *Jupiter* cannot be mov'd in their Orbs upon Supposition of the Motion of a *Plenum*, because such a Movement must necessarily throw their Motions into Confusion ; but upon Supposition that they and the others move in a *Vacuum*, all Motions both of the Primary and Secondary Planets are easily and without any Perplexities accounted for.

Secondly, That there is a *Vacuum*, appears from the Reflection of the Sun's Rays upon any thing of Matter ; for so far as the Sun meets with any Matter to receive its Rays, it certainly reflects them ; which is observable of the Sun's Rays in our Atmosphere, as far as they reach before its Rising and after its Setting ; by which it appears that our Atmosphere is not extended above fifty Miles from the Surface of the Earth : Now suppose our Atmosphere was extended to the Orb of the Moon, then would there be no more Darkness in a clear Night than in a cloudy Day ; because the Sun's Rays would be entertain'd therein, and reflected to us again, all around,
within

within the Circumference of the Earth's Shadow at the Moon's Distance, which would only be about three Times the Breadth of the Moon's Diameter (as may be observ'd by her Eclipses) and signify but little towards the depriving us of a surrounding Reflection of the Sun's Rays, and be only a Shade from its Heat; for if the Moon itself can cast such a Lustre by reflecting its Rays from so small a Body, what then must the Light of its Rays be, if entertained by a *Plenum*, and reflected thereby, when the whole System, as far as its Rays could reach, would not be without its Entertainment, and consequently not without its Reflection? But this *de facto* is not so, therefore there is a *Vacuum*.

Thirdly, If Matter necessarily existed, then could it not be excluded from any where (as is before observ'd of a necessary Existent Being) but the whole infinite Extension must be filled with Matter, without Pores or Parts, or Centre of Gravity; whereas we find, *de facto*, no such Matter in Being; for the hardest Metals, as Gold for Instance, is found to have more Pores than Parts; for Water by much Pressure has been forced thro' its Pores; and if Metals and Minerals admit of Vacuities, much more must other lighter Solids, and still more the Spunginess of the Air: And if these Things, which contain in them real substantial Matter, admit of more Vacuities than Matter itself, then must there be a *Vacuum* perfectly distinct from Matter; therefore the Divine and Spiritual Essence is the only unoriginated and necessary Existence, from whom all Things that ARE have received their Beginnings, and upon whom their *Existence* depends.



DISSERTATION II.

That there must necessarily be one Self-Existent Being, in three Self-Existent Properties, with Attributes infinitely Perfect.

IT has been prov'd, from the present Order and Disposition of Things, that Matter is not necessarily Existent, but dependent upon an Original and first Cause; and the same will likewise be evident to Reason, from considering what Ideas we can frame of the Nature of a Self-Existent and Independent Being.

And it has been observ'd, that a Self-Existent Being, exists without Cause or Original, and must therefore be every where, and whatever is every where must be infinite.

And it is as certain, that *Infinity* must necessarily exist in, and from Eternity, as that there has been an Eternity, which is evident there must, tho' beyond the Reach of our present Comprehensions, because immeasurable, and can only come within the Compass of our Notions or Ideas that it must necessarily be so; so *Infinity* may furnish us with the very same Apprehensions and Ideas, that it must necessarily Exist eternally in Space; and *Infinity* cannot be without *Perfections*, nor *Perfections* without *Intelligence*; for
without

without Intelligence there can be nothing Perfect; nor can there be a necessary Existence without Infinite Perfections (as will appear hereafter;) *Matter* cannot therefore be Self-Existent because incapable of Intelligence or Perception.

It therefore follows, that a necessary Self-Existent Being must be Spiritual, since nothing could be eternal that was incapable of *Infinity*, to render it Perceptive, Intelligent, and Active; which *Matter* being incapable of, must necessarily prove it Passive, and not Existent of itself, since the very Nature of Self-Existence must imply Intelligence; because that which is incapable of Intelligence cannot exist from its own Nature and Necessity. Nor could that which necessarily existed of itself ever be passive; for all Things that are passive are subject to Alteration and Change, and could have no necessary Self-Existence.

And it being impossible, but that whatever existed of itself must be Infinite and Eternal; it will therefore follow that the eternal Existence must be endued with Intelligence, as a necessary Consequence of his *infinite* Existence.

Now that there has been an Eternity past without Worlds and Inhabitants, and yet no Time was ever without them, is easy and natural to imagine, as necessarily there must, and it could not be otherwise, as appears from the foregoing Proofs of the *Non-Eternity of Matter*; so must Space be as necessarily Infinite and Eternal; *Infinity* then was necessarily Existent in Space; and Intelligence must necessarily *exist* in Infinity; and

in infinite Intelligence there must necessarily be absolute Perfections.

As Space must therefore necessarily contain Infinity, Infinity must necessarily exist in Space, and Space be necessarily filled with Infinity ; for otherwise *Space* would have no Existence in it, whereas it contains not only *Infinity* itself, but also all created Existences whatsoever. But to imagine *Space* a Non-Entity of unthinking Nothingness would destroy the very Nature of Infinity ; but Existence implies the Being of SOMETHING that does either dependently or independently Exist, but nothing cannot be said to exist at all, but implies an utter Non-Existency. But *eternally* there is something that must necessarily exist *infinitely*, whether there had ever been any other Existencies at all ; and it is manifest that Space does thus infinitely every where so exist (as I shall more fully prove in the first Dissertation of the additional Part.)

Now, as above observed, whatever is infinite must be perfect, and Perfection must imply Intelligence, as necessarily *existent* in Infinity, as Infinity in Space ; and because that Space must necessarily contain *Infinity* ; Infinity must as necessarily contain the Perfections which must accompany *Infinitude* ; from whence will necessarily flow the Attributes of infinite Perfections ; as infinite *Presence*, infinite *Knowledge*, infinite *Power*, infinite *Love*, infinite *Mercy*, infinite *Goodness*, infinite *Justice*, infinite *Truth*, infinite *Holiness* ; and, in a Word, every Thing that is *Good*, as the necessary Result of *infinite Perfections*.

And

And as Space thus contains *Infinity*, the *Infinity* it contains must needs be a *Spiritual Essence* of infinite Extention, unbounded and unlimited in *Presence*, *Power*, and in all the aforesaid Attributes, derived, as before observed, from *infinite Perfections*, independently existing; and of Necessity so existing, that it is impossible it should not so exist.

Thus *Space*, *Infinity*, and *Eternity*, are immeasurable, and must naturally have existed before Time was, and notwithstanding Time has been produced out of Eternity, and Place out of Space, and Finite Beings out of Infinity, yet *Eternity*, *Space*, and *Infinity* remain unchangeable.

For the unoriginated *Essence* of *Infinity* can never be alter'd by created Time and Duration, nor can Eternity be either lengthened or shortened.

Before Time, his Perfections remain'd uncommunicated, and yet they remain'd no Time uncommunicated; for his Eternity was no Duration of Time, but to him as an instant, a *just now*, an immeasurable Moment; which still is, and ever will be the same in the Divine and Unoriginated Existence.

Tho' this must appear Difficult to our present Comprehensions, since we measure Time by Days, Weeks, Months, and Years; but Space and Eternity admit no Measure or Progression,
of

of which see my *Philosophical Meditations*, Part I. Sect. II.

And in short, there is just as much Difference between Space and Place, and Time and Eternity, as between a finite Creature and infinite Existence.

Hence we may observe, that the Essence of God must be an undivided Essence in Unity and Perfections, as observed in the Beginning of the first Section of my *Journey thro' the World*.

And as upon the Beginning of his Creations his Perfections became communicable, so it thereby became necessary for us that he should distinguish the Essence of his Godhead into such Properties, by which he should have Occasion to communicate his Goodness and Perfections to us; and to that End has made himself known to us, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, by the Appellations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; in which Names we are initiated into his Church-Militant, by Baptism, by the Authority and Command of *Christ* himself, just before his Ascension into Heaven

Similar to which Three Persons of the Trinity, figuratively so called, in one Deity (as observed in my late *Christian Philosopher*) are the three before-mentioned Properties of Self-Existence, in One Self-existent Essence: From which I would only observe, that as there is a Possibility of a Similarity between the *Three* Properties of the Self-existent Essence, by the same
Number

Number of Persons in the Godhead, and the same Number *Three* in the Offices thereof, I hope the Proof of the Three Properties of Self-Existence in the *One* Self-Existent Essence will be sufficient to reconcile the Mystery, so far as I proposed in the aforesaid late Tract, not to contradict Reason, any more than other Mysteries which are out of the Reach of our Comprehensions.

And in the Prosecution of this Attempt, I shall lay down this as my fundamental Proposition.

That the *One* Divine Self-Existent Essence exists in *Three* Divine Self-Existent, Independent, and Unoriginated Properties.

I believe it will be allowed me that there can be no Being without *Properties*, and that the Properties of any Being render it such a Being as it really is: The Properties of a created Being must be created, dependent, and communicated Properties: The Properties of an uncreated Being must be independent, necessary, Self-Existent, and eternal Properties.

Let us see then what Properties may be found that must necessarily exist without Cause or Original, for whatever so exists must be a Property of the Deity: Since whatever is necessarily Existent must be without Beginning, without Cause, and without Creation, which are manifestly Properties of God, and are not to be met with in any other Existence.

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Now

Now that there are *Three* such Properties of Self-Existence, as before observed, and no more, will easily appear by examining what must necessarily exist, and could have no Creation.

Necessary Existence must be that which eternally exists equally every where the same, and therefore *infinitely*, and of which it is impossible that it should not so exist, and must be the only *UBI* to contain all created Existences; and such Existence is *Space*, which is absolutely infinite in itself, even in its own Nature and Necessity, and exists every where the same, as well in the Globes and Inhabitants that exist in it, as out of them (of which more fully in its proper Place) and whatever exists infinitely, and every where the same must necessarily be a Property of the Divine Existence: Hence the incomparable Sir *Isaac Newton* terms *Space*, *Quasi Sensorium Dei*, that is, in that Existence God is infinitely Perceptive of all Things.

Infinity and *Eternity* are also synonymous Properties of Self-Existence, which with *Space* have existed, or more properly do evidently exist every where with it.

In these *Three* Properties, which are manifestly Properties of Self-Existence, exists the Fulness of the Deity, in Properties *Three*, but in Essence and Self-Existence *One*; these are the *Three* Properties of Self-Existence in the only *ONE* Divine unoriginated Essence; one in Self-Existence, one in Independence, and therefore one in Essence.

No

No other Existence or Property whatsoever can challenge Independency or Self-Existence.

Space, Infinity, and Eternity are then the only *Three* Properties of unoriginated Existence, and cannot be communicated to any created Existences whatsoever; for if we consider, notwithstanding their near Affinity to each other, that being used by us as Terms, they cannot be equally applied, and leave the same proper Sense one as the other; and if so, then they must be distinct Properties, and exist in that *Being*, to whom only they can without Impropriety be applied, and to whose Essence they can only belong in their true Extent and Fulness. As for Example, if I use them as Terms, and say, finite Beings were produced out of *Space*, Time was produced out of *Infinity*, and Place was produced out of *Eternity*: Will it not have a nearer Relation to the Terms to change them thus? Finite Beings were produced out of *Infinity*, Time was produced out of *Eternity*, and Place was produced out of *Space*. Does not the Relation to the Terms here stand proper, and the other improper?

Then to know if they are Properties of Self-Existence, let us see if the same Answers will equally hold good for all, and ask of each by itself.

First, Is *Space* a Property of Self-Existence?

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Answer,

Answer, It is certainly without Beginning, and without End, and without Cause or Creation, therefore it must necessarily exist.

Secondly, Is Infinity a Property of Self-Existence?

Answer, It is certainly without Beginning, and without End, and without Cause or Creation, therefore it must necessarily exist.

Thirdly, Is Eternity a Property of Self-Existence?

Answer, It is certainly without Beginning, and without End, and without Cause or Creation, and therefore it must necessarily exist.

Now here the same Answers equally serve to one as another, without any Impropriety or Barbarity of Language, and are as justly applicable to one as another, and they must therefore, one as well as another, be the Properties of the Divine Essence: But those who would pretend to make the Attributes necessarily flowing from this necessary Self-Existent Essence, Properties of the Essence itself, confound the Distinction necessary between Properties and Attributes.

For Attributes are what may be attributed to any Being, as necessarily accompanying such and such Properties belonging to the Being, which render it such a Being as it is.

The Attributes then that must necessarily be attributed to a *Self-Existent*, *Infinite*, and *Eternal* BEING, must be Attributes of infinite Perfections,

since nothing can be wanted in Infinity, which it is not possessed of; and from infinite Perfections no Evil can, but all Goodness must, necessarily arise.

And as these Attributes are in a finite Degree communicable to his rational Creatures, and his aforesaid Properties absolutely incommunicable to any created Existences whatsoever, because uncreated Properties; therefore the Communicableness of the one, and the Incommunicableness of the other, must needs make a clear Distinction between his Attributes and Properties.

As the Properties of a created Being must be created Properties, peculiar and proper only to itself, which distinguish it from another Being of contrary Properties, &c. So the Properties of a Self-Existent and necessary Being must be such Properties that distinguish that Being, a Being only of unoriginated Existence, and that which without Cause exists in incommunicable Properties.

So that Properties of Self-Existence are as necessarily in the Self-existent Essence, as that Being necessarily exists itself, and are as plainly distinct from his Attributes, as the free Actions of a rational created Being are distinct from the Properties of Reason and Intelligence, which render a Free-Agent.

The Actions of a Free-Agent are not his Properties, nor his Properties his Actions; but free Actions as necessarily flow from Reason and Intelligence, as the Attributes of absolute Perfections flow from the Properties of absolute Self-Existence.

But

But tho' God exists in Three, and only Three Properties of Self-Existence, as above proved, and has made himself known accordingly in three Appellations, and in three Offices, has acted, and does act for the Benefit of Mankind, in the Creating, Redeeming, and Sanctifying them; yet this can never divide his Essence, which is *ONE* in *Three*, Co-equal, Co-essential, and Co-eternal Properties, which render him *One* God, so that his Essence is *ONE*, and the Properties of his Essence are *Three*.

Thus *Three* Properties may be easily apprehended to be in *One* God; and *One* God existing in *Three* Properties or Persons, as before explained, without contradicting Reason.

So that by this Account, I hope, the stumbling Block of the Doctrine of the Trinity may be removed, the Belief of which has been by many condemned, as not only above our Reason, but contrary to it; since this Light, into which I have endeavoured to put it, and which, I think, is most genuine, removes the Perplexities of the Case, in reconciling it so far as not to contradict Reason, and that is what I only pretended to undertake, being far from attempting to offer to bring it within the Compass of our Comprehensions; having, I think, proved in my *Christian Philosopher*, that “ even all Things in Nature
“ are Mysterious: And if so, then much more
“ must it be impossible to find out the Al-
“ mighty to Perfection; for it is as much im-
“ possible for a finite Being to comprehend Inf-
“ nity, as it is to have Infinity itself communi-
“ cated to it.”

I desire

I desire that what is here offered may be understood only as an imperfect Illustration of this unconceivable Mystery; not as an Attempt to controvert the distinct Personality (figuratively so called) of the Second and Third PERSONS of the TRINITY.

Whether this Proof of the Being and Attributes of God be conclusive, I leave to the Judgment of discerning Readers.

To prove such an Existence is very easy and natural, from the Effects that are produced by such a Cause; and tho' such Proofs, which are numerous, carry along with them evident Demonstration, yet we find that all the Pains that can be taken, and all the Proofs that can be given, of the like Nature, little enough; yea, too little to suppress Vice and Immorality, the Roots of Atheism and Infidelity; which plentifully spring up, and shoot forth in cumbersome Branches, so that there is need of new Helps to eradicate and root them out; or at least to endeavour to put a Stop to their dangerous Growth and further Encrease.

And as such curious Enquiries may tend to the setting forth of the Glories of the only unoriginated Existence; so they must also tend to the weakening and overthrow of all such Notions as have a contrary Tendency.

And as I have hereby endeavoured to communicate the Ideas I had framed in my own Mind, in the Proof of the Being and Attributes of God, *à Priori*; so I wish it may give my Readers the same Sense I have thereby produced in my

own Breast, and excite in them as high an Esteem and Veneration of the tremendous Majesty of the adorable unoriginated Existence, and Fountain of infinite Perfections, as the Meditations thereof have raised in my own Mind, and give them the same Degree of Delight and Pleasure.

For tho' it be impossible to find out the Almighty to Perfection; yet every small Ray, every Glimpse we are afforded of his Perfections and Glories will add new Life, new Vigour, new Comforts, new Pleasures, and Refreshments to his faithful Servants.

And as his Perfections are infinite, so they will admit of an Eternity of Admiration and Enjoyment, always producing fresh Joys, Love, and delightful Adoration in all his Creatures, which are or shall be prepared by Holiness to enjoy them.

When I consider that the *infinite Presence* fills all Things, and that he must necessarily be in every Place, infinitely Perfect in *Knowledge, Power, Wisdom, Love, Goodness, Mercy, Faithfulness, and Truth*; and that I have received my *Being and Existence* from this *Fountain* of infinite Power, Goodness, and Mercy, and that I am thereby entituled to his special Care and Protection; (if I forfeit not this Right by Rebellion against him) and that he is present with me wherever I go; how reasonably then may I hope and trust, that I shall e're long have the small Rays of his Glories I now behold, as the *Dawning of the Day, or Twilight of the Morning*, break forth upon me in the clear Light of the shining of his Righteousness into my Soul, when
I shall

I shall be released from the present Fetters of Mortality?

Oh! how should these Thoughts and Expectations raise and continue in us an holy Reverence of his infinite Presence, which fills all Things both in Heaven and Earth? And how should this influence all our Actions in all our Concerns and Affairs of Life, that they may be proportioned in their Performances to be agreeable to his divine Will, and becoming his Presence, as the Spectator of them?

And when we withdraw from the Secular Concerns of this Life to appear before him, either in *his House*, or in our Closets, with what Adoration and Awe should we approach to so immediate an Intercourse with his *glorious Majesty*? With what reverential Fear and humble Boldness (because not only allowed, but commanded it) should we approach his Courts? Where in Spiritual Exercises, we may, by an Eye of Faith, behold his *Presence* filling the House, appointed for his Worship, and the Hearts of every of his faithful Servants, and his Angels ready to join with every devout Heart in their Praises, and to assist the Prayers which are offered from unfeigned Lips.

Let us then endeavour, by the Meditations of his continual Presence, to have Life and Vigour added to all our Devotions, whether in his *House* or in our *Closets*; that may not only *then* elevate us, but may for ever carry us out of the Reach of that Ruin, that the Temptations incident to our present State would plunge us into, and enable us

by a Life of Holiness to be daily striving after Perfection ; so shall daily Comforts encrease upon us here, and everlasting Joys await our Reception, when by Death we shall be born into *Life eternal*.

P O S T S C R I P T.

If it be asked how I would infer Perfections from Infinity, and Intelligence from Perfections ? I answer,

Infinity hath no Bounds, but is unlimited in all Respects, and can admit of no Additions ; and that which can admit of no Addition must in itself be absolutely perfect : But without Intelligence something must be wanting that might be added, to make it more compleat.

But as it is impossible, as I have observed, for Infinity to admit of either Addition or Subtraction, so it cannot want any Thing that it is not possessed of, but must be possessed of all Fulness in Perfections, and Intelligence beyond the Comprehensions of all created Beings, which live and move, and have their *Existences* in it.

Infinite Space equally exists within and without all Bodies, rational or irrational, Globes or Inhabitants ; whereas they terminate in their own Dimensions, and may be either added to, or subtracted from : But the Perfections *necessarily* accompanying *Infinity* can admit of neither, there being nothing wanting in it that can be added, being absolutely perfect ; nor can any Thing belonging to absolute Perfections be diminish'd, chang'd, or taken away from it.



DISSERTATION III.

That the Light and Heat of the Sun, dispersed into the Planetary System, are purely Spirituous.

IT must be allow'd from Calculations and Experimental Observations, that the Planetary Revolutions are performed in exactly the same Periods of Time, one Revolution after another, therefore those, who suppose a Materiality in the Rays of Light and Heat, which proceed from the Sun, are not quite delivered from all the Perplexities, which the PROLOMAIC System laid them under in accounting for the Laws of Motion in a rational and natural Way, being herein forced to recur, for the Non-Retardation of the Planetary Motions, to an Almighty Power, continually acting upon them by an external Impulse.

Now if I can make it appear that the Rays of Light and Heat from the Sun, which are communicated to our Planetary System, are only and purely Spirituous; then will their Motions, and the original Causes of them appear to be adapted, at first, by infinite Wisdom, to be continued merely from the first Laws assigned them; and to which, in a natural Way they are bound, and cannot

cannot of themselves break through or change from, nor by any Power whatsoever, except the same Almighty Power, who at first fixed those Laws, should (upon any Occasion arising from the rational Inhabitants of them) repeal or alter them from the Laws and Principles which he at first assigned them, which in all his admirable Works appear to be perfectly compleat, and to have no Laws given, that that infinite Wisdom could amend.

It being proved and granted, as before observed, that the Planetary Bodies describe equal *Areas* in equal Times, is sufficient to prove that they move in a perfect *Vacuum*, or Space void of Matter, as to the common Course of Nature, and that they do thus move, without any continual, forcible, and external Impulse; from an innate Principle first implanted (by the Almighty and infinitely wise Contriver of the whole Creation of the universal Globes and Inhabitants, &c.) in all secondary Causes, will appear, I think, indisputably, if the Objection of the Materiality of the Light and Heat of the Sun be fairly answered, which I believe is now the only Objection that is made against it.

First then, let it be observed that the Rays of *Light* proceeding from the *Sun*, except they are incorporated with a proper *Medium* for their Entertainment, are invisible (such as are *Spiritual Existences*, except united to something *Material*) and therefore passible without Hindrance or Retardation of the Motions of the *Planets* Revolutions; notwithstanding the Planets themselves are warmed and enlightened by the *Heat* and *Light* of the

the *Sun's Rays*, by having their Atmospheres purposely adapted by infinite Wisdom and Power for the Reception and Entertainment thereof by *Refraction* and *Reflection*.

Thus though the Sun itself is a material Body, as a Globe of Fire, yet it is so adapted by infinite Wisdom to afford Light and Heat to the Globes within the Reach of its Influence, and yet the *Rays* of its Light and Heat obstruct not the Motions of these Globes thus enlightened and warmed by them.

For it is plain that the Sun's Rays cease to illuminate any further than they find Entertainment in a proper *Medium*, as is observed in our Atmosphere, before its Rising and after its Setting; so that where they are not incorporate with something Material they become *Invisible*, and no Ways luminous, which proves them to be only *Spirituous*; because only luminous and visible through their becoming incorporate with the Atmosphere of our *GLOBE*, or those of the other *Planets*, which are purposely fitted, as before observed, for the Entertainment of them thereby to answer the wise Designs of their *Creation* for their *Use* and *Benefit*.

The same may be also observed as to the Visibility of the Rays of the reflected Light from the *Bodies* and *Atmospheres* of the *Primary* and *Secondary Planets*, which, being themselves illuminated in the same Manner as this *Globe* we inhabit, can again reflect that very Illumination into the same Atmosphere that is capable to entertain the Light of the *Sun*; when, at the same
Time

Time it must be Self-evident, that there can no material Particles, arising from their Bodies, accompany that borrowed and reflected Light, and it is certain also that the Rays of Light, which shine from them become *luminous, visible, and conspicuous* in the very same Manner, and by the very same Laws of the Primary Light itself, so that the Rays of Light are in themselves *Immaterial and purely Spirituous*.

It may be objected, that the Light of the *Sun*, and those of the *Moon* and *Planets*, which shine with a borrowed Light, are different; in that the *Sun* affords *Heat* along with the *Light*, but the *Moon* and *Planets* afford no *Heat* but only a Reflection of that Light they receive from the *Sun*, and that that *Heat* which proceeds from the Primary Fountain, the *Sun*, must at least carry along with it some very rarified *Particles* and *Effluvia* of *Matter* from its flaming Fountain of *FIRE*.

In answer to which, let it be observed, that *Heat*, as well as *Light* must have a proper *Medium* for Entertainment, before any Effects can be produced by the Influences of a distant *Fiery Globe*.

Which the *Sun* being allowed to be, and placed in the *Centre* of the Planetary System may be said to be the *Soul* or *Spirit* of the inanimate Bodies thereof, by preserving them in their *Orbits* by its central Attraction, and affording them *Light* and *Heat*, which are both of a *pure and spirituous* Kind; I do not mean of any Spiritual Intelligence, but of a *Spirituos Influence*.

Now

Now that *Heat*, as well as *Light*, communicated from the *Sun* to its Planetary System, is only Spirituous, and in that Kind influences our *Globe*, and the rest of the *Planets* may appear, not only from the former Accounts of the Non-Retardation of the Planets Motions thro' any Effects of its surrounding Beams of Light and Heat, and of the *Invisibilty* and none Effects of them, where they are not entertained in a proper *Medium*.

But also from considering the *Sun* as the Center of our System, and whatever material Substance may be thrown off from his Surface by the Force of his fiery Flames, must be confined to his own Atmosphere, and return to its Body as its own proper *Center*; for it is plain, from the Laws of Nature, that whatever Particles of Matter do float in our Atmosphere, or in the Atmospheres of any of the Planets, and consequently of any of the Atmospheres of any Globes whatsoever, that they are confined within the *Limits* thereof, and can only make their Returns to the Surface of the *Globes* to which they belong; as for Instance, the Meteors in our own Atmosphere, whether they be *Watery*, or approaching to Fire, may be observed never to exceed the Limits thereof; but are confined within its *surrounding Circumference*, and only respect this Globe as their proper *Center*; then it must necessarily follow that the *Sun* (which is the very Center of our System itself, and unto which the whole of it pay their Tributes of *Gravitation*,) cannot less confine his own material Substance to his own *Body* and *Atmosphere* than the Planets,

1

which

which respect him as their Center, do confine every Particle, and the Effluvia belonging to them, within the aforesaid Restrictions, notwithstanding the *Communication* of their borrowed Lights one to another.

Thus as *illuminated Bodies* can return their Lights beyond the Reach of their *material Effluvia*; so can the *Sun*, as a Globe of Fire disperse its Heat, as well as Light, without being accompanied with any *material Effluvia* out of its own Atmosphere, in such Proportion as the Atmospheres it meets with are adapted for its *Entertainment*.

So that the Light and Heat of the Sun, enjoyed by its concomitant Planets, are only of a *Spirituos Nature*, and bring along with them no Particles or Effluvia of *Matter* from its Body; tho' vulgarly called Particles of Light and Heat, from their incorporating themselves with such Particles and Effluvia in the *Atmosphere* of our Globe, and those of the other *Planets*, which are agreeable for their Entertainment and Reception; thereby giving them Light and Heat, as well as preserving them in their Orbs and regular Motions; even as the Souls of Animals give *Heat, Life, Vigour, and Motion* to their Material Bodies, which they *actuate*, tho' themselves immaterial.

So that the Sun may be said not only to be the Center, but the *Soul* (by its Spirituous Influence) of this material System, and by its Comforts to support and preserve both the *animate* and *inanimate* Parts thereof, even the whole of it.

For

For before the Creation of *Globes* and Inhabitants the whole infinite Extention was a perfect *Void* or *Vacuum*; empty of Matter, or material Particles, Atoms, or Effluvia, tho' full of spiritual *Existence*, *Intelligence*, *Wisdom*, and *Power*, as is proved in the former Dissertation.

And whatever *Globes* were created in this infinitely extended Space have not at all altered or changed the Nature of *Space*, or rendered it ever the less; which being *infinite* can neither be added to or subtracted from, but will for ever continue the same, and is still as free from material Atoms, Particles, and Effluvia, beyond the Circumference of the created *Globes* and their Atmospheres, as it was before their Creation, therefore the Motions of the *Globes* are free without Hindrance or Retardation; so that a due Order is preserved amongst them in all their harmonious Revolutions, from the Laws of their central Luminaries *Attraction*, and their Tributes of *Gravitation*, above observed.

The Light and Heat therefore of the *central* Luminary interfere not with the Motions of its *concomitant Planets*, but are spirituous and immaterial out of its own Atmosphere; and that its Atmosphere does not reach to any of the *Globes* or *Planets*, which are warmed and enlightened by it, will appear from its Rays not being Luminous and Visible, where they are distant from their own Atmosphere, and not incorporated with the Atmospheres of the *Globes* they warm and enlighten.

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For should we suppose the Atmosphere of the Sun to reach thro' the Planetary System amongst all the Globes it warms and enlightens, then would the material Particles of its Atmosphere be *Luminous* and *Visible* of themselves throughout the whole System ; so that all the Planetary Bodies thereof would be continually enlightened, and no *Darkness* could approach any Parts of their Surfaces, whether in the Presence of the Sun's Body above, or Absence below their Horizons, but would give a *surrounding Illumination* when below the Horizon of any Globe, beyond the Circumference of its *Shadow*.

From hence it appears, that the Sun's Atmosphere is only a surrounding Circumference of its visible Lustre, which Atmosphere terminates with its Visibility ; and returns all material Particles and Effluvia to its *own* Body, as properly belonging to it as *their* Center.

So then the Light and Heat emitted from the Sun into the Planetary System, tho' only of a Spirituous Influence, must be *progressive*, and take up some Time to come from its Body and Atmosphere to the distant Globes it warms and enlightens, which it could not do if its Atmosphere was dispersed thro' the Planetary System.

There can be no such Thing as *instantaneous* Motion, since all Motion whatsoever must suppose *Progression*, whether that which moves be *material* or *spiritual*: And nothing but that which is *infinite* can be *instantaneously* every where ; and that which is thus instantaneously every

every where can suffer neither *Motion, Change,*
nor *Situation*; so that *created* spiritual Intelli-
gence itself must be *progressive*, for if it was in-
stantaneous, then would it comprehend *Infinity*,
because then it would be instantly every where,
which is impossible for any *created Being* to be,
since that is only the incommunicable *Property*
of *necessary Self-Existence*.

From hence it will follow, that what is really *Spirituos* or *Spiritual* does not necessarily imply *Instantaneousness*, nor can it be in any created spiritual Existence.

So then, tho' the Rays of the Sun be *progressive*, 'tis no Argument at all to prove them *Material*; but their prodigious *Velocity* may be said to exceed the Motions of all material Bodies, as much as *spiritual Intelligence* may exceed the Motion of *spirituous Influence*.

An *Opake Body* is also capable to stop or hinder its spirituous Illumination, because it has the Power of excluding those material Particles, to which it must be united to become visible; therefore a material opake Body is capable to receive its Rays only on its Surface, and from thence to reflect them in a transparent Medium, but tho' emitted from a material Globe, yet thro' their spirituous Influence they will naturally pass thro' the hardest transparent Solids, without Force or Reluctancy, thro' which no material Particles whatsoever can so enter.

And as it is placed in the Center of our System,
and must, as above observed, have all material
E 2 Particles,

Particles, which are sent off from its Body, by its continual Flames, returned to it again as their proper Center, I think we may infer, that the Sun may be created and constituted by the infinitely wise and powerful Contriver of the whole material and immaterial Creation, that notwithstanding its continual Flames, it may suffer no Diminution nor irrecoverable Change, but this I leave to more curious Enquirers.

And we may unquestionably observe, that it is adapted to answer all the Ends of infinite Wisdom, so far as it was designed to be useful and serviceable,

And from the present View of its Usefulness, who cannot but be filled with Wonder and Amazement! Oh! pleasing Wonder and agreeable Amazement! to look into the Works of infinite Power, Goodness, Wisdom, Design, and Contrivance,

And if these small Rays of his wonderful Works are thus capable to surprise us, being only now seen as thro' a Glass darkly, what then will be the clear Prospect of them? To attain which,

Let us henceforth endeavour that we may continue that *Veneration* of the *supreme infinite Creator* and *Contriver* of all his *wonderful Works*, that our Wonder and Amazement may put us upon the Wings of heavenly and delightful Aspirations, to render our *Prayers* devout, our *Praises* angelical, our *Lives* holy, and our *future State* happy. *Amen.*

P O S T.

P O S T S C R I P T.

Necessary Existence is that which only is or can be *Instantaneous*, for Instantaneousness comprehends *Infinity* both as to *Time* and *Place*, being not subject to Motion, Duration, or Situation.

Motion respects different *Situations*, Duration respects *Time*, and Situation respects *Place*, but that which is instantaneous includes them *all*, as being *instantly present* to them all, therefore incapable of Progression, and so *immoveable*; incapable of Duration, or separating Time into Parts, and so *unchangeable*; incapable of Situation, or being confined to Place, and so every where *instantaneously Present*.

So that infinite necessary Existence can suffer neither *Motion* as to different Situations, nor *Duration* as to Time, since it necessarily is infinitely extended thro' both Place and Time.

But all *created* Beings, whether Material or Spiritual, as they must necessarily have had a *Beginning* of Existence, must be subjected to *Duration*, as well as to *Place* or *Motion*; for whatever had a Beginning, its future Existence must ever be lengthening, tho' it should *exist* to Eternity hereafter; therefore its Existence is *progressive*, tho' eternal to come, and so may be called an eternal Duration.

But

But *Necessity of Existence*, as it is without Beginning, so it implies an Impossibility of its Non-Existence, and renders such Existence incapable of Progression or Duration, and therefore of its Eternity, being either *lengthened or shortened*, and so incapable of either *Additions or Subtractions*.



DISSERTATION IV.

Of the Immortality of the Soul.

FROM the foregoing Proof of the *Being* and *Attributes of God* it appears, that *Matter* is incapable of *Self-Existence*, therefore it may be subjected to Decay and Corruption: And that the *Self-existent Being* must necessarily be a *spiritual and immaterial Essence*, therefore nothing that was created could become capable of *Intelligence* and *Reason* that was merely material, and not actuated with *Spirit*; for whatever material Bodies are endued with Reason and Intelligence, it must be from the Actuation of an *immaterial and spiritual Existence* in that material Body; and tho' during the Union of this spiritual Existence, or of the *Soul* with the *Body*, the Body will enjoy Sensations proper to their *joint Connexion*, yet there are also Sensations or Faculties belonging to the Soul independent of the Body (as considered in my *Journey thro' the World*) therefore the Body may be subjected to such Alterations and

and Changes as the Soul itself cannot be ; for as the Soul only is the *Life*, which actuates unthinking Matter, so having once entered into Existence, tho' thro' an Almighty Power, in the curious *Composure* of the Matter itself ; yet, because it is of a spiritual Kind it will hereafter for ever *exist*, whether in, or separate from *that* Body which it thus actuates, according to the Nature and Reason of Things ; because *spiritual* Existence is necessarily from Eternity, but material Existence is not, so that whatever is created of a spiritual Nature, must have the Nature of a future eternal Existence communicated to it from its *Creation* by the spiritual Self-Existence of its *Creator*, for spiritual Intelligence being necessarily existent in the *original Cause*, Immortality is from thence communicated to all created *spiritual* Existences from the Time of their Creation : Thus Mortality can only affect Matter, and not Spirit.

It may likewise be observed from the foregoing Dissertations, that Matter is of itself incapable of any *Perception*, and that Perception must be distinct from Matter, and may therefore be either joined to it or separated from it, and exist either with or without it ; and tho' it began to exist in that material Body as a proper Receptacle, yet the Body which it thus began to exist in being material (the *Essence* of which was not eternal, as *spiritual Essence* was) may be subjected to Decay and Alteration, but the Life which is the *Soul*, being of an *immaterial* and *spiritual* *Essence* cannot be subject to Decay with the material and corruptible Body ; for tho' the Spirit may cease to actuate Matter, yet it cannot cease

to

to exist (being itself *Life* and *Intelligence*) when separated from Matter by its corruptible Mortality, but will exist in a *separate* State when forced out of the *Body*, either by a natural Decay of it, or when by some accidental Detriment it is rendered incapable to continue the Souls *Habitation* any longer.

And this may be confirmed by common Observation in Matter of Fact; in that while the Body is in sensible Decay thro' Age or Sickness, the Soul at the same Time suffers no Decay, but will continue to brighten and increase in Knowledge, if it has not been corrupted by giving way to the Indulgences of the bodily Senses, or thro' Decay or Disorder of such *Parts* of the Body, that naturally will obscure and darken its Operation in their present Union; for those, who suffer a gradual Decay of Body, whose *Brains* are preserved in a regular and due Order, will have the *Sensations* and *Faculties* of their Souls *clear* and *bright* to the very last Minute of their Lives; which must necessarily shew that the *Soul* decays not with the Body, and will therefore *exist* without it.

Under what an indispensable Obligation are we then, to prepare for the Concerns of *another* Life? To help you in which I shall refer you to my *Journey thro' the World*.

THREE PHILOSOPHICAL
DISSERTATIONS,
PROVING,

1. That SPACE is absolutely Infinite.
2. That MATTER is not infinitely divisible.
3. That the *Universal Space* is not interspersed throughout with Material Globes.

By BENYAMIN PARKER, Author of the
PHILOSOPHICAL MEDITATIONS, &c.



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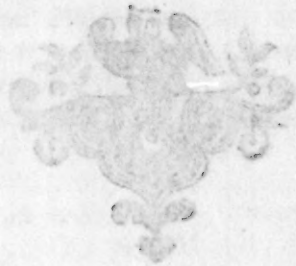
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P R E F A C E.

THE following Dissertations are designed to inform the Judgment, and to brighten the Mind, and to raise and elevate it to an unprejudiced Enquiry after divine and philosophical Truths.

And to remove the Intricacies of common Disputations of this Kind, which may add to the Pleasure, and engage the Industry of young Students, who shall engage themselves in maintaining and defending this Cause. and give their Opponents an Opportunity, either to strengthen their Arguments against them, or to submit to them.

The first and third of these Dissertations are variously disputed, and remain under a doubtful Determination, my Attempt therein is to remove its Doubtfulness, and to put the Matter in as clear a Light as I can; if I should prove deficient in my Purpose for want of Language to express my Notions, I would persuade myself that some more Learned may hereafter discover

Truth on my Side, and employ their Pens in my Defence, and more effectually clear up the Difficulties which I have unsuccessfully attempted to remove.

Indeed I am apprehensive that my second Dissertation is, at this Day, as liable to meet with a general Opposition, as the *Pythagorean* System met with in the Days of *Pythagoras* and future Ages, which in all Schools of Learning was condemned and thrown out as heterodox Philosophy: And tho' it was afterwards revived by *Copernicus*, yet it was still exploded by the Schools and Academies of Learning.

Until the incomparable Sir *Isaac Newton* gave so manifest Demonstrations of the Proof thereof, that the Schoolmen could no longer resist the Evidence, tho' they had before stood out against Arguments, which I think were used before his Time, more than was abundantly sufficient to prove it, had not the Force of the Prejudices of Education over-ballanced the Power of convincing Arguments. But he must now be looked upon as a very weak and unlearned Judge, that will offer to vindicate what the former Schools so obstinately contested for.

So common is it for Youth to imbibe wrong Principles in their Education, that clear Evidence to the contrary will very hardly be admitted, even amongst Men of the best Learning; for we may observe by Experience that there is scarce one in a Thousand that quite relinquish the Principles of their Education, or that do ever thoroughly disengage themselves from the Prejudices

judices first impressed upon them by their Teachers, who at first being able to support their Instructions by Arguments, which tho' false, their Pupils cannot confute, they receive them with due Attention, and with undiscerning Judgment, suffer the Impressions to take Root till it becomes very difficult, even by a diligent Application of the Person thus influenced, to erase the Principles of his Education, but right or wrong it must be as he first was taught.

Even in Religion how seldom is it to be found otherwise than that the Principles of Religion are taken upon Trust, without any Examination into the Reasons why such Sentiments are agreeable to Scripture and Reason; but ask them why they believe? Their best Answer will be, because they were so taught to believe by their Instructors: Some indeed may remember the Reason of their Belief that was given them along with their Instructions, but will not be convinced but their own Persuasion is certainly the best, notwithstanding it may be exposed to the strongest Objections: And even this Bigottry has been as prevalent amongst the Learned as the more ignorant.

And I do not find but that even now this still prevails amongst the Schools, *where* they pretend to search out *Truth* without Partiality, when even there they are ready to entertain the Sentiments of Men, sometimes because learned and rich, who for those Reasons become esteemed, especially where they have acquired a Reputation for Virtue, which commonly heals all Mistakes in their Sentiments: But tho' I would be

far from depriving any of their Reputation justly acquired, yet I would avoid being led into Sentiments which my Reason cannot reconcile to Truth.

But it is still observable that in Schools, even of Academical Education, that the young Students, notwithstanding the Allowance of Arguments for or against Matters in Dispute, that he who sits as the Determiner of the Controversy, is generally adhered to by both Defendant and Opponents; and if he, who seemed to have the better of the Argument, chanced to have his Arguments condemned by his Senior Judge, his Determination is generally acquiesced in by both. And it is certainly Prudence it should be so, except when one or other of the Disputants is capable to produce sufficient Reasons for his Non-compliance.

I have observed that Men are of late in * Religion less bigoted than formerly, and a greater Spirit of Charity to reign amongst Men of different Persuasions, and I should be glad to see the same Spirit universal, which would make Truth more easily discoverable. For it was Bigottry fixed to the Principles of Education that caused the Schools so long to reject the *Copernican* System derived from *Pythagoras*.

And as my second Dissertation is contrary to the present general Sentiments of the Schools, I shall expect it to meet with the more Opposition; however I profess they are my deliberate Sentiments,

* Not to mention the Bigotry of our present Methodists.

ments, as I have not as yet been able to embrace the general Persuasion, and to swallow the common Maxim, that Matter is *infinitely* divisible : But I do profess that if any Man can convince me that my Arguments are insufficient to prove, that *Matter* is not *infinitely divisible*, I will readily retract them.

Now as it has always been my Desire to be as useful to the World as the Advantages of my Learning, Genius, and unbyassed Judgment would admit ; so the present Dissertations are not designed to amuse the Readers with Strains of Rhetorick and Eloquence, but by substantial Reasoning, in a short and close Manner, (for Truth lies in a little Room) I shall endeavour to regulate the Judgments of the unprejudiced, without running into such Lengths, as commonly perplex and puzzle both Authors and Readers : This I have endeavoured to avoid in the Delivery of my Sentiments in the following Dissertations.

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T H R E E

Philosophical DISSERTATIONS.

DISSERTATION I.

That SPACE is absolutely infinite.



DOCTOR *Watts*, in his *Philosophical Essays*, endeavours to prove *Space* finite, from the Existence of so many Globes in it, supposing that the Existence of *Space* is destroyed in the Existence of *Matter* ; or that where *Matter* exists, *Space* must necessarily have no Existence, but must terminate in the Existence of *Material Globes*.

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From hence he supposes Space to be only a Mode of Existence, or as Shade to be a meer Non-entity.

And *this* from the Authority of his Learning and Character, has not only gained amongst the Populace, but also amongst many of the higher Class.

But that it must be a Mistake in the learned Doctor, I shall endeavour to *prove* from the Original of Globes, and the eternal *unoriginated* Nature of Space, whereby I think my preceding Philosophical Dissertations will also be confirmed, in which I have proved *Matter* not eternal, but dependent upon an *Original* and First Cause, and therefore created; or in other Terms, that in the Production of Matter something was made to exist, which did not exist before.

The *Existence* then of Matter must be in *Space*, which necessarily and without Cause existed *infinitely* before, and was therefore the only *UBI* to contain whatever might be created in *Time*, and therefore all created Existences, whether Material or Spiritual, must live, move, and have their Existence in it. For,

Before the Creation of Matter, which, as before proved, could have no independent necessary Existence, *Space* must necessarily exist throughout the universal Void, without Cause or Creation, even every where the same; and as before the Creation of Globes and Inhabitants *Space* must necessarily so exist, so the Existence
of

of created Globes and Inhabitants in *Space* does not in the least alter or change the *infinite* Existence of *Space*; for *Space* does not in the least cease to exist in the Globes and Inhabitants, which exist in it. For,

Let it be considered, that as *Space* was necessarily infinite in itself before the Creation of Globes and Inhabitants; that the Globes and Inhabitants Existence in *Space* does not in the least destroy the Infinity of *Space* wherein they exist; for *that* which exists of itself, without Cause or Original, its Existence must necessarily contain (it being of itself absolutely infinite, and every where) all created Existences whatsoever, it being impossible to find them an *UBI* elsewhere to exist.

Nor can that which is necessarily every where, without Cause or Creation, be ever excluded from being so by the Creation of any Beings whatsoever, since necessary Existence implies its Existence, as well in a *Plenum* as a *Vacuum*; and as all Things created must exist in it, so it must as necessarily exist in them as well as out of them, and as certainly and infinitely as when they had no Existence.

So then as the Existences of Material Globes are in *Space*, so does *Space* exist in Material Globes.

The Existence of *Space* in Material Globes is its Existence in a *Plenum*; its Existence out of them is its Existence in a *Vacuum*.

But tho' we figure in our own Minds these different Ways of its Existence; yet this does not in the least alter the Manner of the Existence of Space *every where*.

For Space is the same whether it exists in or out of Matter.

The Space that any Globe exists in is the same Space whether the Globe exists or not.

If the Globes Existence was destroyed or taken away, yet the Space it existed in would remain.

And though Globes move and change their Positions or Places with Respect to one another, yet *Space* can never be changed; Space being every where the same unchangeable Existence; So that the Position of Globes one to another, and their various Motions, make no Change in Space, which they exist and move in, nor in the least destroy or alter its Infinity; nor does their Motions change the Space they occupy or exist in, their Existence being every one of them exactly in the Middle of infinite Space (as I observed in the first Part of my *Philosophical Meditations*, Sect. II.) so that let their Positions to one another, thro' their various Motions, be what they will, these Motions and Mutation only respect one another in different Positions, but do not at all affect the Space they exist and move in; for let them be where they will in Space, 'tis equally the same as to the Space they exist in, since Lines may be extended from every Part of the Surfaces of every Globe (and consequently from

from the Boundaries of the whole material Creation) without Termination, and therefore equally extended beyond Measure, or Imaginations eternally multiplied.

The Sum of all is this; that as Space must necessarily be infinite in itself before the Creation of Material Globes, even supremely infinite, and must therefore be possessed of all Fulness and Perfections, because nothing can be wanting in Infinity which it is not possessed of (as observed in the former Part of this Work) so it is impossible any Thing could be added to it, or subtracted from it; it will therefore necessarily follow, that the Creation of Globes and Inhabitants could not in the least alter or change the Nature of Space, or its Infinity of Existence, since its Existence is apparently every where, whether in a *Plenum* or a *Vacuum*, as it was when there was only a Void to exist in.





DISSERTATION II.

That Matter is not infinitely divisible.

IT is agreed on all Hands, that Matter consists of Parts, and it must necessarily be a true Maxim; for whatever may be divided must consist of Parts, for that only cannot suffer Division, which is without Parts, and as it is self-evident that Matter may be divided; so it is as evident that it must consist of Parts, otherwise it could not suffer Division.

As therefore it consists of Parts, Parts must necessarily constitute its Substance, which Substance may be divided into the Parts (be they as many as they will) that the Matter consists of; and Parts must consist of Number, not of Infinity; nor can Infinity consist of Number or Parts, for there are no Parts in or of Infinity; and to talk of an infinite Number is absurd, since Number can never be infinite; but when we run to Numbers that surpass our present Comprehensions, we properly enough call them indefinite.

Yet all Numbers we can possibly name or figure are as far from Infinity, in its true Extent, as a single Unite itself.

Now suppose we should by Imagination divide a single Grain of Sand into as many Parts as we were capable to conceive the Number of, yet the Parts being thus imaginarily divided (for it could not be so divided but in Imagination) we must at last center in an indivisible Part, or the Parts of it are destroyed, and it must be confessed (contrary to the plain Proof above) to be without the Parts of which it is allowed to consist.

Now when it is divided into as many Parts as it could possibly consist of, the Division thereof must terminate, it being impossible to divide one single Part into two.

If then one single Grain of Sand will terminate in its Division of Parts, then will the whole terraqueous Globe also terminate in its Division of Parts.

As for Example, suppose one single Grain of Sand may be divided into Millions of Millions of Parts, or if you will into ten Times Millions of Millions, or (as some have given that the Name of) Decatillions, yet each Part must at last become indivisible, because that which consists of Parts, when each Part is separated that constituted the whole, each individual Part must become as a Mathematical Point (of which hereafter) and can suffer no longer Division.

Again, take one single Grain of Sand for an Unite of the Parts of the whole Globe, and multiply as many as will constitute the Substance
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of a Barley Corn, and from thence as many as will fill a Pint, and from thence you might go on to as many as would make up the Bulk of the whole Earth, the Amount of which Number I believe may be reasonably supposed not to exceed the Number above allowed in the Division of a Grain of Sand : And supposing that a Decatillion Grains of Sand would make up the Bulk of the whole Earth, and that a Grain of Sand might itself be divided into as many Parts, it would follow that if a Grain of Sand, which was taken for an Unite of the Parts of the Earth, be allowed to have a Decatillion of Parts in itself, that then the Parts of Matter from their Unity, of which our Globe would consist, would be only a Decatillion of Decatillions.

Again, if we would imagine as many Globes in the Universe, or material Creation, as these are Parts of Matter thus imaginarily allowed in the Globe of the Earth, and supposing every Globe to consist of as many Parts of Matter as this Earth, then the Number of the single Particles of Matter, that would constitute the whole material Creation, would amount to four Times Decatillions of Decatillions.

Thus you might name and figure Numbers at Pleasure beyond your own Ideas of them, that if the Numbers above named be not thought sufficient for the Purpose above observed, you see there is room to number every Thing finite; and that that which consists of Parts, consists of Number of Parts, and can never be infinite, and therefore not *infinitely divisible*, but that there may

may be Names and Figures * of Numbers invented and figured to exceed the Number of all the Parts of Matter in the whole Universe, let the material Creation be ever so extensive, and yet no Number whatsoever can any more reach Infinity, as above observed, than one single Unite.

But it is generally affirmed by the Opponents of this Dissertation that it is impossible to reduce Matter to one single Mathematical Point by Division, and that there is no such Thing as a Mathematical Point, except in Imagination.

But why should it be in the Imagination, if there be no such Thing? And why is it said to be indivisible, if there be no such Thing in Existence?

This is like to affirming, that, that which is not in Existence, cannot be divided because it is not in Existence.

* From Decatillions you may go to ten Times Decatillions of Decatillions, or, for the Sake of a nearer Name to that Number, you may call it Vigentillions, and so on to Trigentillions, Quadragentillions, Quingentillions, Sexagentillions, Septengentillions, Octogentillions, Novengentillions, and Centillions; every one rising in a tenfold Proportion, as from Millions to Decatillions; and as a Decatillion would in Figure consist of an Unite at the Head of sixty Cyphers, so a Decatillion of Decatillions would consist of an Unite at the Head of an hundred and twenty Cyphers, and sixty Cyphers must be added to every Addition of Decatillions till you come to ten Times Decatillions of Decatillions, or Vigentillions, which Number will be figured with an Unite at the Head of Six hundred Cyphers, or ten Times sixty, which Number of Cyphers must again be doubled with the Unite at the Head to make up Vigentillions of Vigentillions, which being again repeated ten Times will make up Trigentillions, and then again the whole Number of Cyphers doubled makes up Trigentillions of Trigentillions, &c.

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But that which is not in Existence ought not to exist in the Imagination, and the Notion ought to be exploded out of the Imagination as a Phantom only sprung from it.

But if it may be proved something more than bare Imagination, and yet, by the Mathematical Laws, be indivisible, then it must be allowed to be one single Particle of Matter, tho' next unto nothing, being so far lost to our Conceptions, that it can only find a Seat in our Imagination: But to disburden the Imagination of this Load, I shall here attempt to give an imaginary Mathematical Experiment of a real Mathematical Point.

For Example, it is agreed that the Periphery of two Mathematical Circles meeting one against another (let the Circumference be what it will) can only touch in one Mathematical Point, and, as above observed, it is also agreed, that a Mathematical Point is indivisible.

This being premised,

Let two Mathematical Globes be hung up in one Room at a proper Distance, opposite to each other, then let them be put into Motion, till their Motions will give a Touch upon each other; that Touch (according to the above Allowance) can only be in one Mathematical Point, which can therefore be only one single, indivisible Particle of Matter, and that single, indivisible Particle of Matter must be that *Mathematical Point* which cannot be divided.

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Just so is that Touch performed in one Instant, by the flowing of which Instants Time is produced; so by the Collection of Multitudes of these Particles of Matter the Substance of the Matter is encreased. And whatever will either suffer Encrease or Diminution can never become any Ways infinite, and therefore not infinitely divisible; nay, the very Notion of the Word divisible plainly implies its *Non-Infinity*, since *Infinity* as plainly implies *Indivisibility*.

But if *Matter* could be infinitely divisible, then would *Time* also, and there could be no such Thing as an Instant in Time, and if there was no such Thing as an Instant in Time, there could be no Time at all, no more could there be any Matter at all, if there was not a single indivisible Particle of Matter.

So that you may hereby see what the Maxim, that Matter is infinitely divisible, will amount to, even to prove that there is no such Thing as Matter in the Universe, which would be the Consequence if there was not one single indivisible Particle; for if there was not one single indivisible Particle, then certainly there must be none at all.

But Instants of Time are always with us, and their continual flowing, and making no stay, is that alone which gives Time a Name of Duration to us.

But as an Instant of Time, and one single Particle of Matter are almost equally difficult for us to frame a just Idea of; so I think they are as easily one as the other reconcilable to our Imagination,

guation, without having Recourse to the old Maxim, that Matter is infinitely divisible; for tho' we find it to be divisible beyond our Comprehensions, we need not thereby persuade ourselves that it is therefore infinitely so; as if we should expect to comprehend every Thing that was not infinite; but this we must expect to come short of in all the Works of the Author of Nature.

But as to Infinity, notwithstanding our common Way of thinking and expressing our Notions to one anothers Capacities, that *Infinity* or *Space* is perfectly Circular, so it is the same in the common Idea we can frame of it every where; and were we to imagine Centers at never so great Distances one from another, they would be equally in the Middle of it. So that let us imagine a Center where we will, at never so great Distance from where we are, and let us from the first Center, be where it will, draw imaginary Circles, the first being at the Distance of the fixed Stars from us, and every Circle carry the same Distance one from another, as the first from the Center, and could they be so repeated by us every Minute to an Eternity to come, we should be as far from including Infinity in the last Circle, as the very Center was from it at which we first began.

What Comprehensions can we then entertain of Infinity, when neither Number, tho' ever so extensive, or Distances ever so immeasurable, come any nearer to it than an Unite or a Center, *a perfect Mathematical Point*? Nothing can then be infinite but necessary Self-existence; nor can

any Thing created be capable of infinite Divisibility, and therefore the Material Creation must have Bounds, as I shall endeavour to prove in



DISSERTATION III.

That the Universal Space is not interspersed throughout with Material Globes.

SOME of our modern Philosophers have made it a Query, whether or no the whole *Universal Space* might not be interspersed throughout with *Material Globes*: But tho' most have judged on the Negative, still it has remained undetermined by all.

To resolve which Query I shall attempt to shew, that such a Supposition is inconsistent with Reason, and the Order of Nature.

First, If the Universal Space was thoroughly interspersed with material Globes, then would they be infinite, and without all Number, and whatever is really infinite can admit of no Addition.

Now it is allowed a reasonable Supposition, that amongst the various Systems of the Globes in the Universe, that all but the Central Luminaries are fitted for Inhabitants, as being made up of the same or like Materials and Elements as our own Globe, and that they are in all Probability

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as properly replenished with various Inhabitants, rational and irrational.

But if the Globes themselves were really infinite, then it would follow that the Inhabitants that replenish them could not exceed the Infinity (not to say the Number) of the Globes themselves.

Secondly, If you will not allow the Globes to be thus inhabited, it is undeniably evident that the Globes consist of Matter, and that the Matter of them consists of Parts, as before proved and allowed; from whence also it would follow, that the Parts of the Matter, of which they consist, could not exceed the Infinity (not again to say the Number) of the Globes themselves; which are such Absurdities as can never be reconciled. For whatever is really infinite can never be exceeded by another Infinity.

Therefore that which is only necessarily Self-existent can only be infinite, but whatever will admit of Number never can.

But the Creation is made up of Parts and Number, not of Infinity, which consists of neither, but is without Parts, and beyond all Number, real or imaginary.

Thirdly, Whatever is really infinite can never be encreased by Addition; from which I observe, that the Inhabitants of the Globes are not infinite, and consequently not the Globes.

Example, We find upon our own Globe that its Inhabitants have encreased and multiplied since the
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the Formation of *Adam*, and still continue so to do, but if there can be no Addition to Infinity there could be no Multiplication; there is therefore no Infinity in the Works of Creation.

For the Works of Creation admit of Parts, Number, and Encrease, and therefore can never be infinite; for it is impossible that Number and Encrease can ever reach Infinity, no not if it should continue to be encreased to an eternal Duration to come; for that which has not Infinity in its own Nature and Necessity of Existence can never have Infinity communicated to it; Infinity being (as before observed) an incommunicable Property of necessary Self-existence.

Therefore the material Globes of the Universe, as well as their Inhabitants, must admit of Number, which tho' never so extensive, they must have Bounds and Limits, and be circumscribed on every Side by Infinity, without Parts, or Measure, or Number, or End.

Yet the Works of the Almighty, necessary Self-existent Essence, are no less wonderfully surprising, being vastly beyond the Reach of our Understandings, and impossible for us to find out, or to adjust the Numbers, Bounds, and Limits of the Works of his Hands.

But we may observe, from the Absurdities that would naturally flow from the aforesaid Supposition of the Infinity of them, that it is inconsistent with the Wisdom and Power of Infinity itself to extend his Works beyond Bounds and Limits.

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But as their Bounds and Limits are so far stretched out that they exceed our most elevated and extended Understandings ; let us with humble Adoration admire the Works of his Power and Wisdom ; let us see our own Insufficiency to comprehend them ; and let us, with spiritual Desires after a more perfect State, pursue the holy Dictates of our blessed Redeemer, by whose happy Guidance may we be conducted out of Darkness into eternal Light ; and may all the Nations of the Earth, thro' the Light of the holy Jesus, see the Salvation of GOD, that as we are all Children from one Parent, and Members of one Body, we may be made Heirs together of the Mercies of GOD in CHRIST JESUS.

F I N I S.

